

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet on Tuesday, October 7, 1997, at 10 a.m. on the nominations of Terry Garcia to be Assistant Secretary of NOAA and Raymond Kammer to be Director of NIST.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND THE COMMITTEE
ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS,
JOINTLY

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, the Finance Committee Subcommittees on Social Security and Family Policy and on Health Care and the Banking Committee Subcommittee on Securities request unanimous consent to conduct a joint hearing on Tuesday, October 7, 1997, at 10 a.m. in room 215 Dirksen.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, October 7, 1997, at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. to hold hearings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent on behalf of the Governmental Affairs Committee Special Investigation to meet on Tuesday, October 7, at 10 a.m. for a hearing on campaign financing issues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, October 7, 1997, at 10 a.m. in room 226 of the Senate Dirksen Office Building to hold a hearing on "Vindication of Property Rights: Improving Citizens' Access to Justice."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Labor and Human Resources be authorized to meet for a hearing on the Nomination of Charles Jeffress to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor [OSHA] during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, October 7, 1997, at 9:45 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs requests unanimous consent to hold a markup on the following pending legislation: S. 309, S. 464, S. 623, as amended, S. 714, as amended, S. 730, as amended, S. 801, as amended, S. 813, S. 986, as amended, S. 987, as amended, and S. 999.

The markup will be held at 3 p.m., on Tuesday, October 7, 1997, in room 418 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Water and Power of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be granted permission to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, October 7, for purposes of conducting a subcommittee hearing which is scheduled to begin at 2 p.m. The purpose of this hearing is to receive testimony on S. 725, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey the Collbran Reclamation project to the Ute Water Conservancy District and the Collbran Conservancy District; S. 777, a bill to authorize the construction of the Lewis and Clark Rural Water System, Inc., a nonprofit corporation, for the planning and construction of the water supply system, and for other purposes; H.R. 848, a bill to extend the deadline under the Federal Power Act applicable to the collection of the AuSable Hydroelectric project in New York, and for other purposes; H.R. 1184, a bill to extend the deadline under the Federal Power Act for the construction of the Bear Creek Hydroelectric project in the State of Washington, and for other purposes; H.R. 1217, a bill to extend the deadline under the Federal Power Act for the construction of a hydroelectric project in the State of Washington, and for other purposes; S. 1230, a bill to amend the Small Reclamation Projects Act of 1956 to provide for Federal cooperation in non-Federal reclamation projects and for participation by non-Federal agencies in Federal projects; and S. 841, a bill to authorize construction of the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System in the State of Montana, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HIS HOLINESS ARAM I

• Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise to speak of a special event which is taking place in the State of Michigan. On October 17, 1997 until October 20, 1997, the greater metropolitan Detroit Armenian community and Michigan, welcomes His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia.

His Holiness has served as the spiritual leader of the Holy See of Cilicia of the Armenian Apostolic Church since 1995 and his visit to Michigan and the Armenian community is truly a blessing. Prior to his consecration as Catholicos he has served as the prelate of the Armenian community in Lebanon for 15 years. His Holiness is to be commended for his spiritual leadership not only in the Armenian Apostolic Church but also in regions of the world which face persistent unrest and violence. Through his ministry, published articles and lectures, His Holiness continues to impact lives and provide steadfast love.

The Armenian community has faced many hardships throughout its history, yet the spirit of the Armenian people and its leaders has never diminished. I am honored to recognize His Holiness for his dedication to religious understanding and the goal of peace throughout the world. May each of us be inspired to seek greater meaning in all that we do. Again, I extend my heartfelt best wishes to His Holiness as he visits Michigan.●

COMPREHENSIVE COAL ACT
REFORM ACT

• Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I rise today to add my name as a cosponsor of the Comprehensive Coal Act Reform Act of 1997, a bipartisan bill introduced by Senators COCHRAN and CONRAD just prior to the August recess. This bill seeks to alleviate inequities and unforeseeable hardships caused by the reachback tax provisions of the Coal Industry Health Benefit Act of 1992 [the Coal Act], while safeguarding the Combined Fund established under the Coal Act to ensure that retired mine workers get the health benefits they deserve.

As part of the Energy Policy Act of 1992, Congress passed a proposal to help protect health benefits of retired mine workers by allowing the trustees of the newly created Combined Fund to reach back and require former employers of retired coal miners to pay substantial assessments to the fund in order to finance such benefits. While its goals are laudable, this sweeping proposal contains some serious shortcomings. For one thing, it unfairly imposes excessive assessments on some companies, while under-assessing others.

Senators COCHRAN and CONRAD have worked for some time to develop a compromise bill that addresses some of the shortcomings in the Coal Act. This effort led to the introduction of the Comprehensive Coal Act Reform Act of 1997, S. 1105, which I think makes a number of needed changes. I applaud efforts of these Senators to find a workable and fair solution to the reachback problem. And I've added my name as a cosponsor of S. 1105 because I support the primary thrust and goals of this bill.

I do not know if the formula adopted in S. 1105 perfectly resolves the problems created by the Coal Act. Some companies will probably continue to argue that they are paying too much and that others are paying too little into the Combined Fund. Retired mine workers will undoubtedly be concerned by any bill modifying the Coal Act until it's shown that the proposal causes no harm to them.

Finally, let me be very clear about one point. My cosponsorship of this bill should not be construed by anyone as a weakening of my support for retired mine workers and their families. They